

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 MC-02 ACDA-07 IO-13 TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05
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P R 072216Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2794

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 0168

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MMAR, MMOL, PE

SUBJECT: ECUADOREAN PRESS REPORTING ON PERUVIAN ARMS BUILDUP

1. MAJOR DAILIES EL COMERCIO OF QUITO AND EL UNIVERSO OF GUAYAQUIL ON JAN. 7 CARRIED IDENTICAL FRONT PAGE HEADLINED ARTICLES ON AN ALLEGED MILITARY PACT BETWEEN PERU AND THE USSR. THE ARTICLE CARRIES AN AFP DATELINE AND IS CREDITED TO THE PARIS PAPER LE NOUVEAU JOURNAL. IT REPORTS THAT THE RECENTLY SIGNED AGREEMENT PROVIDES FOR 700 MILLION DOLLARS IN CREDIT FOR PERU WITH A 20-YEAR PAYMENT PERIOD AT 2 PER CENT INTEREST PER YEAR.

2. THE ARTICLE LISTS IN DETAIL THE ARMS WHICH THE USSR WILL PROVIDE UNDER THIS CREDIT, TO WIT: 450 T-55 TANKS, SAM-2,
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SAM-3 AND SAM-7 MISSILES, SELF-PROPELLED 155MM ARTILLERY, A RADAR NET TO COVER THE FRONTIER WITH CHILE, 30 SU-22 FIGHTER-BOMBERS, AN UNDETERMINED NUMBER OF YAK VTOL FIGHTERS, 12 "NANUCHKA" CLASS MISSILE PATROL BOATS, AND FOUR FRIGATES. THE ARTICLE ADDS THAT PERUVIAN PILOTS ARE RECEIVING TRAINING IN THE USSR AND THAT "SEVERAL HUNDRED" SOVIET OFFICERS AND CIVILIAN TECHNICIANS HAVE BEEN SENT

TO PERU TO CONDUCT TRAINING. IT ALSO CLAIMS THAT PERUVIAN AIR AND NAVAL BASES WILL BE PLACED UNDER THE EFFECTIVE COMMAND OF THE SOVIETS. THE EL UNIVERSO TREATMENT INCLUDED PHOTOS OF A SAM-2 ROCKET AND OF T-55 TANKS, THE LATTER "IN MANEUVERS IN A RUSSIAN DESERT IDENTICAL TO THE ATACAMES DESERT IN SOUTH AMERICA."

3. COMMENT: WHILE MANY OF THE ALLEGATIONS REPORTED IN THE ARTICLE HAVE PREVIOUSLY COME TO ECUADOREAN PUBLIC ATTENTION IN BITS AND PIECES, THE IMPACT OF THE STORY LIES IN ITS ATTEMPT TO CONVEY A FULL PICTURE OF SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN PERU. WHETHER THE INDIVIDUAL ELEMENTS CITED IN THE STORY ARE TRUE OR NOT, THE INFORMATION IS LIABLE TO HAVE A STRONG EFFECT ON THE ECUADOREAN PUBLIC. THE ECUADOREAN MILITARY, WHICH HAS BEEN CIRCUMSPECT IN DISCUSSING ITS DEFENSE PLANS MAY, AS A RESULT OF THIS ARTICLE, FEEL JUSTIFIED TO DISCUSS PUBLICLY THE ARMS PURCHASES IT IS CONTEMPLATING, THUS AGGRAVATING THE SITUATION EVEN MORE. THIS IS THE STUFF OF WHICH ECUADOREAN WAR FEARS ARE MADE.
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